
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair
2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: AB 982
Author: Eggman
Version: April 21, 2015
Urgency: No
Consultant: Olgalilia Ramirez
Hearing Date: July 1, 2015
Fiscal: Yes

Subject: Child care and development: eligibility: homeless children

Note: This bill has been referred to the Committees on Education and Human Services. A "do pass" motion should include referral to the Committee on Human Services.

SUMMARY

This bill specifically identifies homeless youth as a criterion for meeting federal and state subsidized child development eligibility requirements and modifies the list of entities that may identify a child for such services.

BACKGROUND

Existing law declares the legislative intent to give priority to children of families that qualify for applicable federal public assistance and other low-income and disadvantage families. (Education Code § 8205)

Existing law specifies that children are eligible for subsidized child care if the family currently receives aid, meets specified income eligibility requirements, is homeless, or if the child is the recipient of protective services, or has been identified as neglected, abused or exploited (or at risk of such). (EC § 8263)

Existing law requires in order to be eligible for subsidized child development services to be identified by a legal, medical, or social services agency, or emergency shelter as being a recipient of a protective service. (EC § 8263)

The McKinney-Vento Act requires each local educational agency to designate a staff person as a liaison for homeless children and youth, and carry out specific duties, such as ensuring immediate enrollment, access to educational opportunities offered to other students, and providing notice of the rights of homeless youth.
(42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(j)(ii))

ANALYSIS

This bill specifically identifies homeless youth as a criterion for meeting federal and state subsidized child development eligibility requirements and modifies the list of entities that may identify a child for such services. Specifically this bill:

- 1) Expands the existing list of entities that may identify a child for subsidized child development services to include local educational agency liaisons for homeless children and youth, Head Start programs, and emergency and transitional shelters.
- 2) Adds “being homeless” as a criterion for which a child may be identified as needing subsidized child care services by specified entities.
- 3) Includes the prioritization of homeless families within existing legislative intent provisions.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** Local educational agency (LEA) Liaisons for homeless children and youth are required to ensure homeless youth get the education and health care services they need. According to the author, LEA liaisons are not statutorily authorized to identify families as homeless for purposes of child care prioritization. The author also notes that parents experiencing homelessness are less able to access child care subsidies than other low-income parents. This bill seeks to enhance access to federal and state subsidized childcare and development services for homeless families by adding LEA liaisons for homeless children and youth, Head start programs, and emergency and transitional shelters to the list of entities that may identify a child for subsidize care.
- 2) ***Child care eligibility.*** Existing law specifies that children are eligible for subsidized child care if the family currently receives aid, meets specified income eligibility requirements, is homeless, or if the child is the recipient of protective services, or has been identified as neglected, abused or exploited (or at risk of such). In addition, the family must be in need of the child care services due to specified social service circumstances, engaged in vocational training, seeking employment, searching for housing or other specified needs.
- 3) ***Homeless children and youth.*** State regulations define “homeless,” to mean a person or family that lacks a fixed, regular and adequate night time residence and further defines the term to mean a person or family to have a primary night time resident that is supervised publicly or privately, operated by shelter or a place not traditionally designed for sleeping accommodation. Research by Institute for children, poverty, and homelessness reports that parents experiencing homelessness are less able to access child care subsidies than other low-income parents. Mothers who have experienced homelessness receive government subsidies for child care much less often than poor families at risk of homelessness and are more likely to be forced to leave jobs or school due to lack of child care.

This bill seeks to articulate legislative intent to prioritize homeless children and youth for child care services but does not require prioritization of the population for those services. To note, current law identifies homelessness as a criteria for qualifying for subsidized child care services. This bill also attempts to include entities who regularly engage homeless and have experience addressing their unique needs.

SUPPORT

Alliance Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault
Bakersfield Homeless Center
California Equity Leaders Network
California State PTA
Coalition for Youth
Citrus Heights HART
Housing California
LIUNA Locals 777 and 792
Los Angeles Unified School District
National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
National Center for Youth Law
Public Counsel
Santa Cruz County Office of Education
The Ed Ladder
Western Center on Law and Poverty

OPPOSITION

None received.

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